

AK 6377

The Family of Johann and Wilhelmine Klein

A 52/5

THE FAMILY  
of  
Johanna and Wilhelm  
KLEIN

ERIC VIETZE

In memory of my mother Rozsi Vietze,  
my grandmother Nanette Strobl,  
and all members of our family  
who perished in the Holocaust



Johanna & Wilhelm Klein  
at the age of 36, 1861  
From a Watercolor Portrait

## PREFACE

Almost 4 years ago some of the recipients of the Klein Family Tree suggested to me that I write a history of the whole family. It seemed to be an insurmountable task for me because I knew that there were practically no records of our ancestors left and only very few members of our parents' generation were alive. After much deliberation, curiosity about the origins of our family overcame me and I started to renew old family connections and initiate new ones. It was a gratifying undertaking, since almost all of my letters were answered; I thank you all for that. My special thanks go to Margit Hirschenhauser, Ernoe Klein, Manci Raiser and Geza Rimoni who furnished not only facts of the family but also many anecdotes. Unfortunately, since Margit, now in her 95th year, is unable to communicate, only Manci is still with us today. A great difficulty arose when I tried to establish the origins of our great grandparents. I searched the libraries, wrote to many Jewish-Hungarian historians, but no one was able to help me.

Through my investigations, I learned a great deal about the Hungarian Jewry of the last two centuries and finally came up with the theory which follows. (Since I never heard a word of Yiddish in the family I had to eliminate a migration from Poland.) During Maria Theresia's reign, many peasants were brought to the Banat and since there was rarely a migration without Jewish tradesmen, I assume that our ancestors came from Svabia with the peasants. All our grandparents spoke Svabian German and some, a poor Hungarian. I hope that you will find the following pages of interest and that your children and grandchildren will get some knowledge of their Jewish origins, even if part of our family has left Judaism as had so many Hungarian Jews during this century.

szereztés

Zsuzsanna közölte, hogy a név évvel ezelőre megkapta a  
 Klein családról azt javasolták, hogy írjam meg a családi törté-  
 téretét. Megvalósíthatatlan feladatnak tűnt ez nekem, mert ennél  
 maradt fenn sokkal több feljegyzés az eseményekről. Szüleim gene-  
 rációból csak kevesen maradtak meg. De végül is megpróbáltam a  
 a családom eredetével kapcsolatos kíváncsiság és elhatározás  
 felújítani a régi családi kapcsolatokat és újakat kezdeténvesztve.  
 Hálás vállalkozás volt, mert a legtöbb levelemre választ is ér-  
 keztet és ezért mindig köszönetet érdemel. Kiváltképpen  
 köszönetem ezt a könyvet megírni, Klein Ernőnek, Ráiser  
 Marcinek és Rónai Gezánnak. Sajnálatos, hogy csak Marci van itt,  
 mert a 85 éves korát képtelen kommunikálni. Megkértem a szüleim  
 felől akkor, amikor megpróbáltam dédnagyszüleim eredetét  
 megállapítani. Alkalmaztam a könyvtárakat, írtam számos magyar  
 zsidó történetíróknak, de semmi sem nem jött ki. Ekkor a  
 sok mindent megtudtam a magyar zsidóság utolsó két század-  
 beli történetéről és végül is a következő elrejtésre jün-  
 tottam: mivel hogy sosem hallottam jóságról a családunk,  
 vizárat a Lengyelországból való emigráció lehetőségét. Mária  
 Terézia uralmának alatt sok paraszti lett birtokba áttelepítve  
 és ritka fordult el az egy-egy emigráció zsidó kézművesek nél-  
 küül. Feltételezem tehát hogy az egyik a Svábszágban parasz-  
 tokat juttatott egy szomszédra, és az egyik nagyszüleim a sváb-német  
 nyelvet beszélték és az egyik elírta a magyar nyelvet.  
 Remélem, hogy érdeklődéssel fogadják olvasni a krónikát és hogy  
 gyerekeim és unokáim továbbra is tudják a zsidó eredetü-  
 roel.

A krónika angolul lett írva, mert legtöbben ezt a nyelvet ismerik; hiszen az én nyelvem is az. Azonban ez a nyelv ismeret nélküli.

Jóé Békességek!

The Family of Johanna and Wilhelm Klein: A Chronicle

Wilhelm Klein was born around 1825 in the small village of Perjamos in the Banat of Hungary (today, Periam, Romania). We don't know anything about his parents or any possible siblings. Not far from Perjamos was the village , Mokrin (today in Yugoslavia), the home of the Cohn family. Since both families had general stores, they were acquainted with one another, possibly with the help of a travelling rabbi. Wilhelm became interested in one of the Cohn's older daughters, the tall and pretty Johanna. They were married around 1850. We know of four more Cohn children: the youngest son David was in partnership later with his sister Adele's husband Hirschenhauser in Vienna where he ran a successful grain business. Johanna's sister Hermine was also married in Vienna and her youngest sister, Tante Fischer lived for many years on the outskirts of Temesvar where I met her in 1923.

Klein Margit married Adele's son Felix in Vienna in 1915. Johanna and Wilhelm were active people: the business grew. They had to give their peasant customers a great deal of credit and often were paid with grain after the harvest, which allowed them to enter the wholesale grain business. They were also quite active in another respect: Johanna bore 18 children of whom 12 survived. The surviving children were born between 1851 and 1869 and formed the generation of our grandparents. Wilhelm did not reach his 50th birthday. There are two stories about his death: My grandmother told me that he died of



pneumonia, but a few years ago I heard the following: " He always rode to the markets in a carriage with four horses and one day the horses were frightened by something and ran away at great speed; the carriage turned over, grandfather fell out of the carriage and succumbed to his wounds." Wilhelm's death must have occurred in 1872. Johanna was left with 14 children of whom an older daughter died shortly before her wedding. A little boy did not survive his early years either. All reports indicate that Johanna was not only a good business woman but also a strict and just mother.

Considering the conditions of the time she gave her 8 daughters and 4 sons a good education. She was very religious and had a kosher household, which was not maintained in the families of most of her children. Her most important task after her husband's death was the continued leadership in the business and the marriage of her eight daughters. With the help of her oldest son Eduard, she succeeded in both. As the children left home, one by one, the large house became a burden to Johanna and around 1885 she moved to an apartment in Temesvar where Eduard and his brother had, in the meantime, established a flourishing wholesale grain business. Until her death, she lived across the street from her daughter Nanette in Kinizsi Ucca 9, near the main square of Temesvar (the house is still standing and I was able to peek in the courtyard). Since five of her children lived in Temesvar, there were many grandchildren and the girls regularly gathered in her house to learn all kinds of needlework. Johanna died in 1909 in her 85th year. Her grave, well taken care of by her late grandson Ernoe Klein, can still be seen in the Jewish cemetery in Temesvar.

#### FANNY

Johanna's oldest daughter Fanny (1851-1935) was the first one to be married. The marriage did not last very long and soon Fanny returned to her mother in widowhood. After due time the young widow was introduced to Alexander Schwartz; they were married shortly thereafter and Fanny moved with Sandor to Budapest where they lived for many years in the Bathory ucca. Their home became one of the favorite places in Budapest to the young men and women, Fanny's nephews and nieces, who came from the provinces to study at the University or just to visit. All remembered the delicious meals they enjoyed on weekends at Fanny's place. I must admit that her strudel was as good as that of my grandmother Netty. We were also allowed to roam around in the interesting store with stoves and ovens which was on the ground floor. Fanny and Sandor had no children, but Fanny had 3 from her first marriage: Vilmos who died at a very young age, Caroline (Klara) (1877-1952) and Amalie (Mici) (1880-1955). Mici married Julius Engel; they ran the oven store for many years. They had no children.

Klara married Otto Baron, a banker, in 1901 and lived with him in Buda and later in various parts of Lipotvaros in Budapest all their lives. (Otto Baron was a cousin of Heinrich Gellert whose daughter Trude I married 38 years later in New York.) Klara and Otto had two daughters, the only great grandchildren Johanna was to know. Stephanie, the younger one was a beautiful child, born in 1905. She had diabetes and died in 1915. Nora, born in 1902, the dean of our generation, studied in France and Switzerland and became an expert in French. She married Tibor Helvey in the 1930's and survived the ordeals of the Hungarian and German Nazi excesses in Budapest, as did her mother and aunt. Nora and Tibor came to the U. S. A. after the war



where both held professorships at various universities. Today, Nora lives in Tampa, Florida where she has her own school now for French, German and Italian languages. Although in her 84th year, Nora is still a very cheerful woman and wonderful company. She adds that she has not children, YET.

#### EDUARD

To Eduard (1854-1916), Johanna's eldest son, came the responsibility to carry on the family business at the early age of 18. He was a serious young man and did quite well for a while in Perjamos, but set his aims higher. He spent some time in Vienna with his mother's relatives to learn more about the grain business and settled during the early 1870's in Temesvar to start a wholesale grain business. At first he sold the grain which the Perjamos store bought, but soon bought grain from other sources and with the help of his younger brother Zsigmond built one of the largest grain businesses in southern Hungary: Wilhelm Klein's Erben. It seems that Eduard had set himself two goals during his early years in Temesvar: build the business and help his mother to get his marriageable sisters married. He reached his goals by the time he was 30 years old. He was approaching 35 when he finally decided that it was time for him to get married. He made the acquaintance of a very beautiful young woman in Budapest: Jenny Jonas, a twin. They were married in 1887 and had three children: Villy, Margit and Irene.

Eduard had very strict ideas about the education of his children and was a very strict father, but could not suppress the unique character of each of his children. Villy, born in 1889, received his doctorate in Business Administration in Leipzig. He then joined his

father and uncle in their business and carried it to even greater success with his cousin Imre Klein. Villy was a man with a great sense of humor who loved to have fun. Although fond of children, he never had any of his own; he married a divorcee, Renata, who had 2 beautiful daughters. During my year in Temesvar in 1923 he was my favorite because we used to have contests in eating fine pastry; he usually let me win. Villy survived the war only to see his life's work destroyed, first by "Romanization" and after the war by nationalization. It marked the end of Wilhelm Klein's Erben. Villy died in 1954.

Eduard and Jenny's first daughter, Margit, was a quiet redhead who, from her early youth was more interested in spiritual matters than in worldly pleasures of which Temesvar offered many. Contrary to the customs of the time, she wanted to be trained as a photographer but had to give up her plans which her parents strongly opposed. They believed that a young woman should find a husband and raise children. She was barely 18 years old when she was sent to Vienna to live with her father's youngest sister.

Vienna became Margit's new home and she stayed there until shortly after Hitler's occupation of Austria. She married Felix Hirschenhauser, her father's youngest cousin in 1915. Felix, a physician, served on a Red Cross train during the war and Margit joined him as a nurse. She stayed with Felix until shortly before the birth of her daughter Susie. Her activities during the war set the pattern for all of Margit's life. Although her marriage broke up in 1925 and Margit lived in fairly modest circumstances, her house was always open to visitors for a bed or a good meal. More than one

student from Temesvar found a temporary home in her apartment. After the Nazi takeover of Austria in 1938, it became quite clear to Margit that she had to leave Vienna and with the help of "The Society of Friends" (Quakers) she managed to emigrate to England shortly before the outbreak of the war. She spent the difficult war years in London and besides eking out a modest living she was active in the work of the Quakers whom she joined after a while. After the war Margit was able to come to New York where she found a good job in a high class ladies fashion store as supervisor of knitters, a position for which she was highly qualified since she had lifelong experience in knitting and sewing. As in London, she became active in the work of the Quakers and also chose to live as a housemother in a house where young socially and politically active people lived. After a few years she was accepted in the "Bruderhof", a Hutterite community near New York City. She worked hard there and was quite happy until her independent mind brought her into conflict with the mind controlling rigidity of the leadership of the Bruderhof. At the age of 70 she had to leave the Brudehof without having a place to go. Owing to the many friendships she had among the Quakers she was accepted as a trial member at Celo Community in the mountains of North Carolina. The community, a land trust, was founded by Quakers during the 1930's. She lived in a tiny house near the Meeting House in the woods. She became one of the most beloved and respected members of the Celo Meeting. Even at the age of 90, Margit worked in her beautiful garden and was host to anyone who needed shelter or a meal. Four years ago she had a massive stroke which incapacitated her completely. It is fortunate that after many years she had a reconciliation with the

Bruderhof and has been moved to their place in Pennsylvania, where she will be well taken care of.

Margit's only daughter, Susie came to the U. S. A. in 1939 and at the outbreak of the war joined the Armed Forces. There she met her future husband, Paul Barcus, a Marine Captain. They had three children: Mike, Irene and Peter. After Paul's retirement from the Marines they lived in Ames, Iowa, where Paul taught at the University. Susie lost her husband in 1982 and still lives in Ames.

Irene, Jenny and Eduard's younger daughter, was in many respects different from her sister. A beautiful redhead, she loved fun and became one of the most popular girls in Temesvar. She married Doci Loenyi, heir to a large farm which he never could run successfully. They survived the hardships of the war in Temesvar and emigrated to Israel. Doci died there and Irene came to Montreal to join her daughter Eva who had moved there with her third husband, Ervin Duscheneck, also from Temesvar. Ervin died a number of years ago but Eva still lives in Montreal. She also helped her brother Tommy and wife to leave Romania and settle near Montreal.

#### NANETTE

After Fanny's marriage in 1876 three more followed during the next three years. Peppy and Nanette were married in 1877 and 1878. A suitable man was found for Nanette in the little town of Vinga between Perjamos and Temesvar. Adolf Strobl, the son of a foundling of the 1830 revolution and owner of a large vineyard was anxious to marry Netti and the marriage took place in Perjamos soon after their first meeting. Netti moved to the vineyard and lived there happily with Adolf for 10 years. They had two daughters and five sons. Berta, the

oldest, whose picture always hung in my grandmother's bathroom, died in childhood. Sixteen days after the birth of her youngest child, Rozsi, (1888-1960) Adolf died of pneumonia and Netti was left penniless because her father-in-law would not give her Adolf's share of the vineyard.

As so often during his life, it was Eduard who came to Netti's rescue. He found an apartment for her and the six children in the Kinizsi ucca in Temesvar. He also helped her to find a livelihood by lending her the money to start a "Sackleihanstalt" (sack lending business). At harvest time she rented sacks to the peasants and had a crew of women repair the sacks during the off-season. She ran the business with mixed success until all her children were grown up. Netti was barely 5 feet tall, a hard worker with a wonderful sense of humor. Her education ended with the 8th grade, but she made up for it with great common sense and wisdom. Although strict, she had a great deal of fun with her children: Vilmos, 1880-1945; Dezsoe, 1882-1918, Marcel, 1884-1914; Joska, 1885-1945; Sandor, 1886-1979 and Rozsi, 1888-1959. With one exception, the boys were excellent students and also got into a lot of mischief. As they became teenagers the Strobl house became the scene of many theatrical and magic performances which made them popular among cousins and friends. Only Vilmos did not participate and was a studious loner; he even managed to get his own room in the small apartment. At the outbreak of the World War I, with all her children gone, Netti moved to a small apartment where she spent the rest of her life. Every day she visited another member of her large family to be of help to the younger ones and to bring good cheer to the houses of her siblings.



Towards the end of the century, Vilmos went to Budapest to study Electrical Engineering. With tutoring he soon earned enough to rent an apartment where he lived for over 25 years. The apartment at Sziget ucca 4 became the home not only of his brothers when they came to the University but also for some cousins who came for their studies to Budapest. His studies finished, he worked as an engineer for Siemens-Schuckert until the outbreak of World War I, when he joined his Hussar regiment. When the monarchy came to an end, he was an active supporter of the short-lived republic until Bela Kun's excesses became repugnant to him. In the early 1920's he started his own engineering business which brought electricity to many Hungarian villages. He married Margit, the daughter of an old friend in 1924 and their son Gyuri was born the same year. Vilmos was a brilliant, serious man with a sense of humor that often was hard to understand especially for children. Gyuri was a bright but very difficult child. He went to the German school in Budapest and I had the pleasure of tutoring him in 1935. He also studied engineering and held some very good positions after World War II due to his outstanding knowledge of his field. He was married 3 times and had a son and a daughter. We did not hear from him after 1950 and heard that he died a few years later. Vilmos almost survived the war, but was murdered by Hungarian Nazis and thrown into the Danube with his brother Joska and sister-in-law.

Dezsoe, Netti's second son, had only one thing in common with his next three brothers: he also got into a lot of mischief, which did not end with his youth. Dezsoe was a tall handsome man, very popular with women, young and older. He loved life, but could not fit into the



studious lifestyle of his brothers, which often led to considerable conflicts. He finally became a journalist with the Temesvar Zeitung, a job which he held until the outbreak of World War I. He was taken prisoner during an early offensive of the Russian army and spent the rest of the war in a prisoner of war camp in Western Siberia. His letters to his mother indicate that he was generally well taken care of. He was freed by the Soviet regime shortly after the November revolution and was on his way home when he and a number of other freed prisoners were killed by a band of White Russians as they were boarding a train in St. Petersburg (Leningrad). I was barely three years old when my grandmother read the notice of Dezsoe's death in the Temesvarer Zeitung. To this day I cannot forget her outcry of grief.

Marcel was the only one in the family who was very religious and was willing to pay the price during his very short life. He wanted to become a lawyer and therefore went to the Piarist Gymnasium to study Latin and Greek. Although the anti-semitic teachers gave the young orthodox Jew a hard time, he graduated with honors and went to Budapest to study law. When Joska came to Budapest a year later, they started a unique, if not quite legal, business. Being excellent stenographers, they took down all lectures, transcribed them and sold them to the rich sons of the nobility, who thus did not have to attend the lectures and could follow their gay lives. Marcel had started his law practice when the war broke out in 1914. He was sent to Russian front, where he never wavered in his religious customs, ate only kosher food in spite of great difficulties. He sent two cheerful postcards to his mother, who never heard from him again after the battle of Przemyśl.

Joska, stocky and perhaps the best looking of Netti's sons, was imaginative in mischief as well as in serious matters. As he grew older he became the dominant member of the family. He studied Mathematics and became a professor at the University. Like many other young men, he joined his regiment at the outbreak of World War I with great enthusiasm, only to return disappointed and wiser. He resumed his teaching at the University in 1919, but the professorship did not suit his ambitions. He started to tutor sons of a number of very wealthy families and also had a children's camp in Siofok. At the same time he learned the banking business and started his own small bank with a partner in 1923. A year later he married Quittner Mariska, a very wealthy widow. His business consisted mainly of factoring of furniture dealers and made him the only member of The Strobl family to have considerable wealth. He made great demands on himself and those around him. He never forgot his modest youth, and in the Klein family tradition, helped many relatives of lesser means. He was only 50 when angina pectoris limited his activities severely. He and Mariska survived World War II in their apartment in Hold ucca 27 under the protection of the Swedish Red Cross, only to be denounced by his janitor. Hungarian Nazis arrested them and Vilmos, who happened to be making his daily visit. They were shot and thrown into the Danube on January 15, 1945, one day before the Russians occupied Pest.

Sandor, the youngest boy, did not participate in all his brothers' pranks, but when it came to the magic shows in the Strobl house, he was equal to anyone. He developed into a master magician and even in his 90th year he held the attention of children for hours

with his tricks. The intense studies in Chemistry prevented him from joining his brothers in their "publishing" business, but, naturally, they helped him through those years.

Sandor emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1911 and held a number of good positions as chemist, the last one as chief chemist of the newly formed U.S. Radium Corporation. New York had a sizable Hungarian population where he made many friends. In 1920, a group of Hungarian-Americans decided that New York should have a Hungarian Theater. The project, which required a large sum of money, was a failure, and Sandor, who invested heavily in it, was left almost penniless. He decided that it was time to visit his aging mother and his siblings. It was in Temesvar where I first met him. On his way back to the U.S. he stopped in Vienna and Paris and saw some "luminous" gadgets. He bought some raw material, and in the fall of 1924 he started the STROBLITE Company, the first firm in the U.S.A. which manufactured Phosphorescent paints and novelties. Never satisfied with the status quo, he continuously experimented and became the first one to use Ultra Violet Light with Fluorescent colors to create spectacular effects for the stage and displays. Sandor married Lily Adams in 1928 and together they formed a hard working team in building the new business. Their only child, Annette, was born a year later. Since her mother continued to play an active role in the business, Annette spent a lot of time there and saw her father's fame grow. Sandor's business continued to grow and one of the highlights in his work was the 1939 World's Fair in New York. He was instrumental in the design and execution of 14 exhibits with Fluorescent colors. Millions of people saw and admired the result of his ingenuity. He

was well over 80 when he retired. He lost Lily in 1975 and spent his last years in a retirement home in Miami, Florida. He died in his sleep shortly before his 93rd birthday in 1979.

Annette, who has the sharp mind of her father, studied Biology. She held a number of research jobs but then decided to teach. After her mother's death, she moved with Sandor to Miami, where she taught Biology in high school until 1985. Annette never married but enjoys an active social life, skiing in winter and lately, bird watching.

Netti's youngest child, Rozsi was tiny, vivacious and quite pretty. At the age of 6 she was allowed to sit in the window facing a doll of her size. She liked her role and passers by rarely could distinguish between the little girl and the doll. She only finished the Hoehere Toechterschule, but was active in many social events, theater parties and poetry readings. Through her brother Dezsoe she met many of the visiting poets. Ady Endre, one of Hungary's most celebrated poets, dedicated one of his poems to her. The poem, with his inscription, is now in the National Hungarian Library.

During one of her frequent trips to Budapest, her cousin Klara invited her on a trip to Abbazia (now Opatja). There she met a tall, very thin, good looking German man: Alfred Vietze. They fell in love and were married in 1913 in spite of some resistance from her family because Alfred was Catholic. Rozsi moved to Frankfurt am Main with a very substantial dowry. The young newlyweds moved into a brand new apartment house which Alfred, an architect, and his father, a builder, had just finished. Their only child, Erich, was born on March 15, 1915 and shortly thereafter, Alfred was drafted into the army. Netti came to Frankfurt to see the baby and soon convinced Rozsi to come to

Temesvar where no food shortages existed as in Germany. We moved into the apartment at Emmausgasse 4, where we spent the next 3 1/2 years. With the war at an end, Rozsi was anxious to return to Frankfurt, where Alfred waited. It took almost a year before we found some space on a Red Cross train which returned German invalids to their home.

Life in Germany had changed dramatically after the war. My grandfather's business was no more and Alfred was without a job. We came home to a smaller apartment which we shared with Alfred's mother and youngest sister; my grandfather, estranged from his wife lived in the bathroom. It was a very difficult time for Rozsi who never really felt accepted by her in-laws. She started to embroider craft pieces with designs by Alfred which they tried to sell at the Frankfurter Messe. She also sold ladies' lingerie to wealthy women, going from house to house while Alfred held a bank job for a short time. He was a highly educated and studious man, but was unable to adjust to the difficult times. Their last common enterprise was an antique shop in Bad Homburg in 1923, which was successful as long as the inflation lasted. At the height of the inflation, 1 U. S. dollar cost 420,000,000,000 Marks. When the Mark was revaluated, the business fell apart, which also brought the marriage near its end.

At the start of the business in Bad Homburg, I was sent for safekeeping to my grandmother in Temesvar; it was my first railroad trip alone. During my nine months in Temesvar, I did not have to go to school but my grandmother made me write home every day and gave me some arithmetic problems. I was fascinated meeting all the relatives and my interest in the Klein family dates back to that time. Rozsi picked me up in Spring 1924 and, after passing an exam in the German



school in Budapest, I started Gymnasium in Frankfurt.

Rozsi's divorce came through in June 1925, exactly 12 years after her wedding. During the next 10 years, she established her children's dress business which eventually gave her the reputation of being the finest children's dressmaker in Frankfurt. In 1929 we moved from our miserable basement apartment into a brand new development for women only. Since few of the women were nuns, there were plenty of male visitors.

January 30, 1933 did not come as a surprise to us since the political situation had gone from bad to worse. We thought, however, that Hitler would soon have to go like all his predecessors. Although I had been a mediocre student, somewhat improved with age, I wanted to study ancient languages. By the time I graduated in February on the day of the Reichstag fire it was clear that the University was out of the question. Like all my Jewish friends, I looked for a good commercial apprenticeship. I ended up in a cosmetics factory where I got a commercial education which served me well in later years. On my next vacation in Budapest, I asked my uncle Vilmos for a job and four weeks later I had a telegram from him to be in Budapest in two days. I left Frankfurt the next day, spent a little time in Budapest and continued to Vascut near Baja in the Bacska. Vilmos had a contract for the electrification of five villages and I learned every phase of the work: from climbing poles to installing transformers. The work was hard and the winter was very cold; even the milk froze in my room. But I loved the job and also learned a good deal about the peasants of the area since we worked in Hungarian, Swabian and Bunjevacz villages. By April I was back in Budapest; I tutored my cousin Gyuri, but also



had a lot of time to get into political mischief. It was then that I became familiar with the treacherous Stalinist ways. It was a lesson for life. When my uncles proposed a trip around the world I declared, "If I leave here, I shall not return!". Eventually I received my immigration visa for the U.S.A. from Sandor and left Budapest in January 1936. I departed with a heavy heart, leaving behind many friends and the ideals of my youth. After spending two weeks with my mother in Zurich, I arrived in New York on February 5. Two days after my arrival I started to work in Sandor's business. Over the years I gained some expertise in the Luminescent color field, an experience which fascinated me. Sandor was a patient teacher and after less than a year he entrusted me with the manufacturing end of his business. At night I went to college to study chemistry. The work for the 1939 World's Fair brought my studies to an end after I fell asleep several times in Quantitative Analysis.

In June 1938 Sandor received a letter from Baron Otto (Klara's husband) advising him that some relatives of his were coming to New York from Tel Aviv. On a very hot July day in 1938 I was entrusted with meeting the newcomers at the pier. Thus I met Trude Gellert. She tells me that my fair command of English impressed her; I was impressed by her beauty. Trude had been in Palestine for 4 years as the first trained dietician and came here to study for a year. I did not let her go back. We were married on July 21, 1939. Although both families thought that at 24 I was too young to get married, I can say after 47 years that it was the one real smart step I took in my life. Besides being beautiful, Trude was outstanding in her profession, both serious and full of lust for life. In the long, sometimes difficult

years of our marriage she has remained loyal and supported me in all my endeavors.

After living for two years with my mother we moved into a tiny apartment in Brooklyn where our son Peter was born in 1944. A year after his birth we found a more suitable apartment in Queens where Alan was born in 1948. In 1951, I left Sandor and started my own Luminous materials business on a shoestring. I worked hard, developed some interesting products but was not able to sell them. Those were the hardest years of our marriage and my late hours in the business deprived me of seeing our children grow. I also became a representative of some manufacturers of serigraphic (silk screen) materials which improved our income somewhat. In 1958 a competitor bought my business and asked me to open a branch for him in Syracuse, N.Y.

We moved to Syracuse in 1959 and found life easier, without financial worries for the first time in many years. I also could spend more time with my family. Shortly after we moved to Syracuse, my mother, who had had a serious operation in 1951, had to be hospitalized again and this time we knew that she would not return home. It meant weekly trips to New York for me until she died in February 1960 after much suffering. Our years in Syracuse were good ones; the boys grew up and went to nearby State University of New York at Binghamton and we made good friends. Peter studied Sociology and later made his Ph.D. in Psychology. He was married in 1965 and moved to Detroit, where his first son, Zachary was born in 1968. After a year's post-doctoral fellowship in Berkeley, California he obtained a research and teaching position at Peabody College in

Nashville, Tennessee. His twins Anya and Dmitri were born there. He was divorced in 1976 and shortly afterwards moved to Washington, D.C. where he has been working since at the National Institutes of Health. Peter is a specialist in Child Psychology and Mental Retardation. In 1980 he married his present wife Deborah, also a Psychologist and their son Joshua was born in 1984.

At the height of the Viet Nam war, Alan started to study Political Science, also at SUNY Binghamton. Like his father, over 30 years before, he wanted to learn how to start a revolution. Having found that colleges don't teach revolutions, he switched to Fine Arts and had a number of good constructions to his credit. After graduation he followed his brother to California and lived in San Francisco and then in Oregon. He worked hard on his constructions, lived on odd jobs, but was unable to sell his work. In 1973 he met a former professor of Philosophy from his college and with him and some other young people, started a religious commune, The Christ Brotherhood. The group does not believe in working for money; they want to live the life of Christ. They are trying to help all kinds of needy people. Alan has two daughters, Sophie and Sarah and although he is not married he lives with a lovely woman named Shelah.

After the boys left home my extensive business travels became burdensome and Trude had to spend too much time alone. I asked my firm for a transfer and in 1970 we moved back to the New York area. In 1972, I became manager of the New York office of the largest screen printing ink manufacturer and had to learn how to handle a lot more people than ever before.

As my 60th year approached we realized that professional success would not have brought us the means to continue living in New York after my retirement. We had visited Margit repeatedly in Celso and like the mountains of North Carolina. In 1973, we bought a little house and 4 Hektar of land and moved here three years later. Although many adjustments had to be made at first, we love to live here, we love to garden and enjoy the mountains.

#### PEPPY

It is said that Josephine (Peppy), Johanna's third daughter, was the most beautiful among her 8 girls. In 1878 she married Mr. Biedl and moved to Nemetszenrpeter - today Zrenjanin in Yugoslavia. Her 5 daughters and one son were born there but while they were still teenagers the family moved to Mehala, a suburb of Temesvar. Their young son died at a very early age. The Biedl house had two great attractions for all of Johanna's grandchildren: they had a chocolate and candy factory and quite a number of cherry trees with big Bing cherries.

Both Biedl parents died soon after 1900 and the oldest daughter, Riza became the head of the family and reigned over her four younger sisters. Carola, the next one, found her life's job at Wilhelm Klein's Erben, where she also met her husband Perlesz Lajo. They had no children. Carola died at a ripe old age in a retirement home.

It seems that Vilma, 1884-1945, was not very happy under Riza's regime and managed to go to Budapest while still in high school. She stayed with Fanny neni, finished high school and obtained her teaching certificate. Vilma was the first woman in the family who obtained a profession before her marriage, a fact which was not much appreciated

by the family hierarchy, especially by her uncle Eduard. It seems that Vilma was the first one who insisted on her "women's rights". She started to teach in Koermend, where she met Schnur Janos, also a teacher and married him in 1910. They later changed their name to Sztankai. Vilma's first child, Magduska was born in 1912 but did not survive an attack of diphtheria at the age of 7. It was a very hard blow for Vilma .

Consolation finally came in 1921, when Klari, the only surviving grandchild of the Biedl family, was born. The Sztankais were teaching for almost 40 years in Koermend, where they built a nice house. They were highly regarded in the community in which they participated in much social work. Vilma was the head of the local Red Cross for many years. The political situation after 1939 caused them a lot of worries and difficulties. They survived the war, but Vilma died in 1945 of stomach cancer. Klari followed her mother's footsteps professionally and became a teacher, but also became an accomplished seamstress. Her certificate in hand she was put into a school in a tiny village near Keszthely on the Balaton. She was able to stand the primitive conditions for one year and then landed a job in Szombathely. In 1944 Klari married Hadnagy Geza, a high school teacher from Sopron. She returned to Koermend where her daughter Klari was born in 1945 and her son Geza 5 years later. Her husband Geza died in 1974 after a long illness. Klari was teaching until 1971; she says: "Our family really taught all Koermend." She married her present husband in 1980 and both are retired in Kapuvar.

Daughter Klari studied law and is married to a lawyer. They have two children: Anita (16) and Dianka (10). Son Geza is a machine



engineer, married and also has 2 children: Kristi (11) and Geza (9). He lives in the house his grandparents built in Koermend.

Giza, the fourth Biedl sister, was born in 1888 and never married. She lived with her also unmarried sister Riza for most of her life in Temesvar. Both dealt for many years in Romanian embroideries which they also exported to Austria and Germany through their cousins Margit and Rozsi. Their life was not easy and, unfortunately, this affected their relationship with the rest of the family. Their sisters and others in the Klein family helped them often which, however, did not prevent their bitterness in old age. Giza also spent some time in Budapest where she ran the household of Strobl Joska. With the help of Klein Ernoe they spent their last years in a nursing home near Temesvar.

Aranka, the youngest of the sisters, also moved to Budapest in her youth. She married Dr. Molnar Henrik who was in partnership in a brush factory with his blind brother. Aranka and her husband had no children. During the war their factory was requisitioned and, like so many in our family, they had to spend the war under miserable circumstances, living on the few valuables they were able to save. After the war, they were in the process of rebuilding the factory when it was nationalized. They first had to move to Hortobanyi Puszta and finally received permission to live out their lives in a rented room near the Balaton. Aranka died in 1954.

#### BETTY

Like most of her sisters, Betty, Johanna's fourth daughter also met her husband through the efforts of her brother Eduard. A still existing exchange of letters of 1879 between Betty and her bridegroom Ludwig Kohn shows that a marriage like that can be for love, not only



for convenience. Betty and Ludwig were married in August 1879 and lived for a while in Hatzfeld near Kikinda. Ludwig was a commission buyer and seller of grain. Not long after their marriage they moved to Nagyvarad (Oradea) where most of their children were born. Both died long before World War I which left Seren (1880-1978), the oldest to take care of her younger siblings. Two of the children: Leona and Bela probably died before their parents' death.

Seren, a beauty in her youth, had a very difficult life. She was married around 1914, but lost her husband in 1920. She never had any children. During the 1920's she lived in Budapest with or near her sister Hedvig. She made a modest living with homemade cosmetics and for a while supervised the household for Strobl Joska's wife Mariska. It was during that time that I met her. She was almost 50 years old when she married again and moved with her husband to Sibiu in Transylvania. Her second husband died there very soon thereafter. The fact that she lived in Romania during the war saved her life, escaping Adolf Eichmann's death transports from Hungary. After the war she moved back to Oradea and spent most of the rest of her life there. She died at the age of 98 in a Jewish home in Arad. Loved by all, if not always liked, Seren spent the greater part of her life helping others in the family.

Marcel (1882-1944) was a kind and jovial man. He spent most of his life in the shoe industry, at times very successfully as a director of a large shoe factory, at other times as a struggling traveling salesman. He loved life, food and children. He never married but was definitely no misogynist. He perished in Auschwitz.

I met Komor Imre (the name Kohn was changed to Komor early in the century) in 1923 during my stay with my grandmother. He lived with us

and worked for Wilhelm Klein's Erben. He was a kindly, shy young man who could not find his place in his cousins' business. He returned to Oradea and was greatly helped by his brother, Marcel. He also became a victim of the Holocaust.

Hedvig (1886-1984), being without parents had to stand on her own feet at an early age. She also worked for a number of years at Wilhelm Kleins Erben in Temesvar. She was bookkeeper and secretary and learned to speak German better than her employers. It was during this time that she became good friends with my mother, Rozsi and a large number of the other cousins. Aside from the family relationship she was often helpful to my grandmother who struggled with her "Sackeihaanstalt". Like so many people at the time she was drawn to Budapest where she secured a position with Kohn Zsiga, a cousin on her father's side. Here she met Stern Lajos who worked for the Magyar-Olasz Bank. They were married in 1916. Their sons Laci and Andras were born in 1917 and 1921 respectively. Lajos became director of the bank, but retired from there after a while; he held a number of other bank positions and made, in Bandi's words, a living that was "enough for a middle class life". There was, however, a tradition in the Klein family, going over a generation: the affluent ones helped those who had hard times in one way or another. This was the greatest heritage of Johanna and Eduard. It was during the 1920's and early 30's that I was a frequent visitor and my mother and I never missed a chance to visit the Sterns in Buda. Unfortunately, the visits were short and really did not provide a chance to get well acquainted.

Both Laci and Andras finished at High School of Commerce and Laci, at the age of 22, had the courage to leave his family and a job

to emigrate to Chile. He left penniless. Since I had left Budapest over three years before, I know how hard such a decision was for a young man. I must admit that it was probably easier for me since my Uncle Sandor lived in New York. Laci and I were the lucky ones; the real heroes of the family were those who had to go through the nightmare of the persecutions of the war and those who did not survive it.

Life for Hedvig and Andras became harder and harder. Lajos died in 1924 and Hedvig started a kindergarten and rented rooms while Andras was in a forced labor camp until 1945. They rarely had any news from Laci and then only a few words through the Red Cross. After some odd jobs, Andras and Hedvig received visas for Chile through Laci's efforts. They arrived there in 1947. Like many immigrants, Andras had to try many different jobs until he was able to establish his own business in Concepcion, Chile. He deals in sewing machines, bicycles and parts. He married Gabor Kathy in 1956 and is lucky to have 3 very talented daughters, Patricia, 28, Marcela 27 and Gabriela, 20.

Laci and wife Grete from Bonn moved, in the meantime, to Capetown, South Africa and now have a business nearby. Their daughter Eva lives with her husband and two daughters in Santiago, Chile. Their son Luis also lives in South Africa. Hedvig continued to be well and alert and enjoyed celebrating her 96th birthday. She spent half a year with Andras and the other half in a retirement home in Santiago. She died peacefully in 1984.

Vilma, Betty's youngest daughter (1893-1944) married Szekely Marci in 1920. They owned a textile store in Oadea, which they

started together and built into a successful enterprise. It gave them a good life. They had 2 daughters: Lili, born in 1921 and Marta, born in 1923. Both girls were able to finish High School and Marta was married to Feldmesser Matyas immediately after receiving her diploma. Marta and her parents were deported to Auschwitz in 1944 and did not return. Lili had intentions of continuing her studies at the University but was prevented from matriculating due to the "Jewish Laws". She went to Budapest, lived with her aunt Hedy and finished Textile school. At the age of 22 she married Arato Andras, a journalist who died of tuberculosis in 1944. These were tragically difficult times for Lili and only a very courageous person could survive them. Her son Gabor was born during the week Lili's parents and sister were deported. She spent the rest of the war in Budapest often hiding and hungry with the baby. She returned to Oradea in 1945 where she slowly recovered as a young widow. She started to study languages at the University of Kolozsvar (Cluj). In 1947 she married Pasztor Pal, a Radiologist. They moved to Brasso (Brasov) a year later and Lili started to teach French. Pali became the chief of the X-Ray department in the largest hospital. Their daughter Panni was born in Brasso in 1950.

Although life was bearable in Brasso with its beautiful surroundings. It became clear to the Pasztors that there would be no future for their children under the existing circumstances. Again, Lili felt that she had to move and in 1971 they left all their possessions and apartment and moved to Germany with two small suitcases. Their children could not go with them. With the help of a lawyer and a sizeable sum of money they were finally able to

"purchase" their son Gabor in 1974. Two years later, Panni, who in the meantime married, could also follow them to Germany with her husband Lenart Misi. They also had to abandon their dearly acquired apartment in Budapest.

The Pasztors elected to go to Germany because it was the only country which recognized their diplomas and thus enabled them to build a new life. They settled in Bad Homburg where Lili taught French at the High School and Pali had a position at the hospital as radiologist. Pali's sudden death in 1983 left Lili alone again. Gabor, a physicist, lives in Switzerland where he works for Brown Bovary. Panni, a mathematician, has a teaching position at one of the universities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where her husband also works. During Lili's first visit to Panni in 1984, we had the good fortune to have her visit here in Celo and learned to love this courageous lady during the short week she spent with us.

Juli (1858-1944) was not yet 14 years old when her father died she lived about 8 more years in Perjamos in her mother's house. It was around 1880 that she married Bergel Ludwig and moved to Zenta where she spent almost all of her adult life. Ludwig had a forwarding agency and Juli took an active part in the business. Like most of her sisters she was widowed early. All the Klein sisters were on very good terms with each other, but perhaps the most beloved among them was Juli. When I lived with my grandmother, she often told me about her bright and good natured sister in Zenta. To my great regret she was the only one whom I never met among those who were alive during my lifetime. After the loss of her husband she also lost her beautiful daughter Renee in 1918, who left her son, Pali.



Both of Juli's sons, Jenoe and Zoltan became lawyers and practiced law together in Zenta. Both were married, and Zoltan had a daughter Vera. Zoltan, like the rest of his family, was deported to Auschwitz and did not return. Jenoe, a lover of fine art, had an apartment which resembled a museum; no piece was too good for him. He anticipated the Nazis and ended his own life in 1944.

Hajnal, the youngest of Juli's children married also in Zenta and had 2 daughters: Eva and Vera. She worked with her husband in their business and Juli neni, who had moved in with them, was largely instrumental in the upbringing of the two girls. Vera speaks only in glowing terms of her grandmother. In April 1944, Vera, who had survived all her siblings, was taken to Auschwitz at the age of 86 together with her daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter Vera. She was immediately separated from her family and died soon afterwards. Hajnal and Vera, separated from husband and father, were taken to an airplane factory in Zittau, Germany as forced laborers. In May 1945 they were liberated by Russian soldiers. Vera's sister Eva, who had married Bergel Laci in 1942, was also put on a transport bound for Auschwitz, although she was in her fifth month of pregnancy. The transport went astray and she landed in an Austrian agricultural labor camp where her daughter Batja was born. Her husband was taken to a labor camp in the Ukraine from which he escaped in January 1945. In short succession Eva and Vera with her mother also were able to return to Zenta.

Eva's son Jancsi, now Johanon, was born in 1949 and they all left for Israel the same year. Eva lives in Jerusalem; Laci died very suddenly in 1985. Batja lives on a Kibbutz and Johanon in Berlin.



Vera married Dr. Viktor Gros in 1947. They could not leave Yugoslavia until a replacement could be found for Viktor at the hospital where he worked as a lung specialist. The exit visa was finally granted in 1951. Hajnal joined them. Vera's daughter Norni is an X-ray specialist and has twin children: Liren and Amit, three and five years old. Reuven, Vera and Viktor's son followed in his father's footsteps and is also a physician. He has an 8 yea\_ old boy named Tal. Vera and Viktor live in Netanya where we had the pleasure of their hospitality in 1984.

#### ELLA

There was one more sister of marriageable age in the 1880's for whom Eduard had to find a husband: Ella, Johann's 7th child. He found the man in Mr. Weisz, who had a bakery supply store near the old cathedral in Temesvar. The couple lived very modestly and had four daughters of whom Irene died in childhood.

Ilona, the oldest, married a well-to-do textile merchant and moved to Gyula Fehervar (Alba Julia). She had no children. Olga, born in 1888, married Gruenfeld Joska, who over the years dealt in many phases of the textile field. Their son, Tibor, was born in 1913, their daughter Alice in 1917. We don't know much about the family's fate during and after the war. Alice died quite young and Tibor managed to get to Israel in the early 1950's. The Rimonis helped him when he appeared one day penniless at their home in Tel Aviv, but never saw him again. He was married, divorced and eventually left Israel. He lives in Frankfurt/Main and has a somewhat dubious restaurant enterprise. No one has any connection with him.

Zelma, Ella's youngest daughter was never married and lived with her mother for many years in Temesvar. After the war she was able to get to Israel, where she lived under difficult circumstances. She was misinformed regarding her permit of residence in Israel and in her grief ended her own life.

#### MATHILD

Having found husbands for his six older sisters by 1890, Eduard, a married man in the meantime, could think of the future of his two youngest sisters. A suitable husband for Mathild was found in Samuel Steiner, a well-to-do merchant from Borosebes near Arad. An early widow, Mathild, like many of her sisters, eventually moved to Budapest where she died during the 1920's. The Steiners had three sons: Miklos, Bela and Joska.

Miklos had a clerical job in Budapest and later married his cousin Juci Langsfelder. He helped his brother Bela through Medical School. Bela did his internship in a hospital near Siofok on the Balaton and operated on my leg in 1921. He became the chief physician at the Children's Hospital in Budapest. Bela married late and had no children. After the war we saw him once on his visit to New York. He died in a street accident in Budapest. Joska became a lawyer and practiced in Arad. He was married and had two daughters of whom one, Marta is married in Bucharest.

#### ZSIGMOND

Johanna and Wilhelm had to wait a long time before their second son was born. Finally in 1863, Zsigmond (Zsiga bacsi) arrived. Zsiga was less than 10 years old when his father died and thus spent some critical years of his youth in a house full of women. Since Eduard had to take his father's position in the business at such an early

age, he had to do without much formal education. Johanna decided that her second son should get the best available. Through her siblings in Vienna she arranged for Zsiga to become an apprentice in a large bank. He spent a number of years in Vienna and life in the big city widened his horizon both professionally and culturally. He also learned to love the good life. When he moved to Temesvar, he first became a junior partner in Wilhelm Klein's Erben and later a full partner. He brought new ideas and was the progressive in the business, making a good team with his conservative brother Eduard. Around 1890 he married the daughter of a prominent physician, Dr. Morris Fischer: Vicca. Vicca's good nature brought her into high esteem in the family. She loved children and I remember always receiving wonderful pastry and a small gift when I visited her in 1923. Zsiga's business acumen was largely responsible for the growth of Wilhelm Klein's Erben into one of the largest grain brokerages in Southern Hungary. But Zsiga's life was not all work; he loved playing cards for high stakes and enjoyed parties. He was a very generous man and, like his brother, helped any sibling, nephew or niece who was in need. He also loved old hats. One day Vicci neni sold one of his old hats to an old clothes dealer. Ten minutes later Zsiga came home with the same hat. "Where did you get that hat?" his wife asked him. "I just bought it downstairs." He had bought the hat back for twice the money Vicci had received. In the 1920's, Vicca became very ill and she died of cancer in 1924. It was a very hard blow for Zsiga, who, although stricken with angina pectoris, outlived her by 4 years.

Vicca and Zsiga had 4 children: Ilma (1895-1949), Imre(1897-?), Ercsi (1898-1959) and Ernoe (1901-1982). I remember Ilma from my

earliest youth as a very kind, somewhat heavy-set woman. I saw her almost daily in the Doja Park during the First World War, where I played with her daughter Edith, who was only 1 year younger than I. Ilma was married to Ernoe Klein (no relative), who built his inheritance of a few weaving machines into a very substantial textile mill. Ernoe Klein was not only an expert in his profession but also one of the most highly educated men in the family.

Edith finished her high school studies in Vienna and was married to Husscar Oedoes and Rado Alexander. She had one son, Gabor, who today lives in Cologne as an electrical engineer. Edith died in Tenesvar in 1956 of Leukemia, not yet 40 years old. Ilma's first son, Robert was born in 1918. He was probably the only genius of our generation in the family. His intellectual acuity was obvious even in his youngest years. He studied medicine at the University of Cluj, philosophy at the German University in Prague and science in Bucharest. After serving in the Romanian army he had to do forced labor. He received his degree in philosophy in Bucharest in 1947. Robert received a French Government Scholarship which was withdrawn at the request of the Romanian government when he declared himself a refugee. He remained without nationality for the rest of his life. To finance his studies in Paris, Robert washed dishes and gave private lessons. In 1965/66 he was professor of Art History at the University of Montreal. Robert wrote many essays on Art History and several books which were published in a number of languages. He was primarily interested in the Renaissance. He last lived in Firenze where he died in 1967 of unknown causes. He was never married.

Robert's brother, Otto, born in 1920, tells me that he had a very hard time keeping up with his brother. Nevertheless, he became an expert in the textile field, studying in Romania and France. Otto was going to join his father in the family enterprise. The war and the events afterwards changed all that. The 1930's brought many dangers to the Jewish population of Romania. Hitler's expansionism encouraged the anti-semitic Fascists and, with the various changes of governments in Romania, the situation of the Jews became critical. There were deportations from Eastern Romania in the early 1940's which later were halted and ceased with the beginning of the Russian occupation. The fate of the Jews in the part of Romania which Hitler returned to Hungary is well known; it is not hard to guess what would have happened to the Jews of the Banat if the tides of war had not turned. This fact only saved all our relatives in Temesvar.

Otto lived through those years in Temesvar and saw his future career vanish. During the war his father's factory was "romanized" and after the war "Nationalized". The family was without means and suffered great hardships which eventually cost the lives of Ilma as well as Ernoe. Otto's salvation was his expertise in the textile field which led to a position in the new government. After a number of years he received an assignment abroad from which he did not return. Otto has been living for some time in Frankfurt/Main with his second wife Zoska. He is now retired from his position with "Hoechst". Otto has two sons: Stefan and Peter, both in the theatrical field. Stefan is married and has two children. I met Otto after 50 years in 1980 and again in 1984 in Israel. I found him to be a very warm person with great concern for people.



Of Zsiga's older son Imre, I know only that he studied business administration, joined his father's business and ran it later with his cousin Villi. He was married and saw the business destroyed during and after World War II. Imre and his family emigrated to Israel in the 1950's where he died a few years later. He had one daughter, Vicca, who now lives in Holland. She has three children.

Ilma and Imre's younger sister, Erzsi (1898-1959), remains in my memory as a slight, very kind lady. She was indeed one of the most loved cousins of our parents who always had a kind word and a giving hand for anyone in need, both in Temesvar and later in Tel Aviv. She married Remenyi Geza (Rimoni), a descendant of one of the earliest Jewish settlers in Banat-then Bansag province. Geza had a lumber business which was quite successful, although not successful enough for his ambitious father-in-law. Erzsi had two children: Mary (now Myra) and Tommy, who were born in 1925 and 1929 respectively. The end of the war also brought the end of Geza's business and only after great difficulties was he able to emigrate to Tel Aviv with his family, almost penniless. His great knowledge of wood helped him to start a picture frame shop where both he and Erzsi worked very hard. Erzsi became ill in the 1950's and died in 1959 of cancer. Geza remarried a few years later. His second wife Hedy, from Berlin, made his old age a very pleasant one. There was no one among the men who married into the Klein family who took as lively an interest in our family as Geza. After my first visit to Tel Aviv in 1980, he sent me a long report about the Klein family, beginning with our great grandmother. I was fortunate to see him in March 1984, a few weeks before his death. Although in great pain, he took the trouble to talk

with me for half an hour. His death was a great loss for all who had known him.

Myra became a kindergarten teacher and is married to Ben Bar. She has the warmth of her mother, but worries too much. They have two daughters: Maya and Liana. Maya's children are Inbal, Inon and Noa; Liana is the mother of Jael and Amir.

Tommy, from his early youth an excellent mechanic, became an expert in making molds for plastics and is known for his skill not only in Israel but also in Europe and the U. S. A.. It is said that he can design the most intricate molds in the industry. His lovely wife Esther comes from Hungary. Tommy has a wonderful sense of humor and works much too hard. He and Esther have three sons: Rafael and Gad who work in Tommy's plant and Dan, who recently finished his military service. Rafael is married and has a son, Reuth.

Ernoe (1901-1982), Zsiga's youngest son, was a rebel in his youth and left Temesvar to study beer brewing in Germany. His outstanding knowledge of the brewery field made him known internationally, which enabled him to change his position as the head of a large brewery in Germany to one in Oradea after Hitler came to power. When Oradea was reincorporated into Hungary, Ernoe returned to Temesvar, where he headed a brewery until his retirement. He had married Fini, the daughter of a customs official in Germany. They had two daughters: Brigitte and Hannelore. Brigitte studied French and was teaching at a high school in Temesvar until 1983. She lived with her parents and devoted all her time to her sick mother and her father. One cannot imagine a more devoted daughter. Hannelore had become a pharmacist and was married; she had one son, Szillard. Hannelore died at a very

young age of cancer. Szillard had been living in Sighisoara with his wife; he is an engineer. They have two sons, Ralph Thomas and Herbert Jan. At this time they may have settled in Pforzheim, Germany.

Ernoe and Fini died in June 1982, within one week of one another, less than a year after my visit to Temesvar during which I was treated royally in spite of the severe shortages. Ernoe spent three full days relating to me his remembrances of the family. He also showed me the grave of Johanna and a number of other relatives in the Jewish cemetery.

#### FERDINAND

Not much is known about Johanna's other two sons. Ferdinand apparently was not cut out to join his older brothers in the family business and moved to Budapest. We have no information about his profession or trade. It is known that he was deeply involved in the stock market which, at the turn of the century, was frowned on by the middle class. He lost heavily at one time and his debts were paid by his brother Eduard with the warning to refrain from "speculation". Like chronic gamblers, he was unable to follow that advice and incurred large debts in his stock market dealings again. This time Eduard refused to bail him out and in desperation Ferdinand committed suicide. He left his wife Ida and two sons, Gyuri and Pali. I remember visiting Ida with my grandmother in 1927 and hearing that her two sons were living in Berlin. Nobody in the family knows anything about their fate.

#### KARL

Karl, the youngest of Johanna's sons, was almost a foot taller than his brothers and also was sent to Vienna for commercial training. Karl chose to stay in Vienna for the rest of his life and for a time became estranged from the rest of the family. He was married and had a daughter, Liesl, reputedly of great beauty. Liesl had an unsuccessful love affair which led to a nervous breakdown and confinement to an institution where she died at a young age. Karl's wife died in the 1920's and a few years later he married his housekeeper with whom he had two daughters. Margit Hirschenhauser helped his girls escape from the Nazis to England, but did not hear from them later. I visited Karl with my mother and recall a kind and enormously tall man.

#### IRMA

Johanna and her youngest daughter, Irma (1870-1933) continued to live for some time in Perjamos, but after a few years their house became a burden and they moved to Temesvar. They lived there across the street from Nannette Strobl in Kinizsi ucca, a house around the corner from the main square. The house is still standing today.

Relieved of the care for so many children and seeing that the business prospered under the guidance of Eduard and Zsigmond, Johanna mellowed considerably and Irma, a vivacious young lady, enjoyed much more freedom than her sisters before. On a visit to some cousins in Nagy Kikinda Irma met Armin Langsfelder with whom she fell in love. She consented to marry Armin only if he could find a position in the city. He was able to acquire a going grain business and Irma's brothers consented wholeheartedly to the marriage. It took place in

Eduard's home after which the couple moved to Kikinda.

Irma had five children: Boriska (1897-1982), Gyuri (1899-1943), Endre (1901-1960), Juci (1904-1968), Magda [Manci] (1906- ). Boriska was not only a beautiful child, but became a smart young woman who became very popular in family and society. Irma was the only one among her sisters who was in a financial position to give her daughters an education which went beyond the regular school. As Armin's business flourished the family moved into a large apartment in Budapest in 1909. Governesses were brought for the children from France and Germany and at the age of 16, Boriska was sent to a boarding school in Weimar. Manci reports: "They shaped her there into a perfect lady of society, also teaching her English." Not long after her return from Germany the war broke out and many cousins came to Budapest for their assignment in the army. The Langsfelder house was open to all of them and many friendships in the family were started. Boriska married Andor Pal after the war. Pali was a good looking man and was a stockbroker. They had two children: Pista and Panny. The marriage did not last long since Pali died in 1933 of leukemia. Boriska, left with two small children managed well during the rest of the decade, but survived the Nazi excesses only by hiding.

After the war Pista (Steve) went to Australia having learned the bakery trade. He lives with his wife in Sydney. They have two children: Richard and Michelle and three grandchildren: Andrew, Fiona and Melissa. Panny received a scholarship in Switzerland and studied Psychology. Panny followed her brother to Australia where she is married to Oszk Ballassa. Boriska joined her children somewhat later. She died in Sydney in 1982.



Like most of his male cousins, Irma's son Gyuri did not escape the army and was drafted in 1917 when he was barely 18 years old. By the time he was discharged, the family had decided to move back to Kikinda which was still headquarters of Armin's business. The move was done under the worst circumstances and Irma had a very hard time crossing the still undetermined border. The move was precipitated by the excesses of the Bela Kun regime, which were followed by rising anti-semitism. Gyuri went to a commercial academy in Zagreb and then joined his father's business, which had to be liquidated when Armin died suddenly in 1922. Gyuri took a good job on the Dalmatian coast where he also married. When the Nazis occupied Yugoslavia he, his wife and three year old daughter were deported and never heard from again.

Gyuri's brother Endre was a very kind and bright boy, also full of mischief. He studied Chemistry in Vienna, but could not finish his studies after his father's death. After helping his mother in the liquidation of the business he emigrated to Argentina where a friend had promised him great opportunities. The adventure in Argentina was not a success and he returned to Yugoslavia only to be arrested at the border. Because he had not served in the army 8 years earlier he had to serve for 3 years as a punitive measure. When war broke out he was drafted again and captured by the Russians. He spent the rest of the war in a Russian prisoner of war camp. When he returned after the war, he found only devastation and no trace of his brother. He married and decided to go to Israel where he opened a hardware store. A heart attack ended his life in 1965; his widow Klari lived until 1985.

Juci, Irma's second daughter, whom I knew as a charming young lady, was supposedly a difficult teenager. She grew up in affluence and learned to speak German and French fluently at home. "For education and polishing" (Manci's words) she was also sent to Weimar for a year. With the death of Armin, the life of the whole family changed, but Irma carried on valiantly. Juci went to Budapest, lived with Boriska and shortly afterwards married Steiner Miklos, her cousin, who had courted her for a number of years. The early 1920's were difficult times, inflation reached astronomic heights which cost many people their savings and often their means of making a living. Many marriages were destroyed. Juci's marriage was not spared, although the final break came only after the end of World War II. After many difficulties, Juci's only daughter, Edith (Miriam) was born in 1933. By this time, the ugly signs of anti-semitism became clearer, although many members of our family failed to see Hitler's threat. The economic situation had improved and many Jews lived in a "fool's paradise". The war brought great deprivations to Juci's family, but they were spared the worst. Juci left Miklos after the war and was able to emigrate to Israel with Edith. She died in a Kibbutz in 1968. Edith, now Miriam, married Shlomo Cirati and had two sons: Jaron and Ofer. Jaron lost his life in the Yom Kippur War and Ofer moved to South Africa, married there and has one son, Jaron.

Irma's youngest child was also Johanna's youngest grandchild. Magda (Manci) was a very beautiful and bright child with many talents which she pursues to this day. She had a very happy youth which she describes vividly in her family history (It may be available from her on request). She enjoyed the good Langsfelder education and also

worked in the family business for a while after her father's passing. Later she developed a small export business in peasant textiles. In 1931 Manci met Raiser Laszlo, a Hungarian architect who worked in Greece. They were married that year. I had the fortune to be in Budapest and was invited to the reception. Manci and Laci went to live in Greece. Manci's son Jancsi (John) was born on June 4, 1932 in Budapest. By that time Irma's health had deteriorated considerably but it was fortunate that she could see her last grandson. She died in 1933.

Manci and Laci had a happy and interesting life in Greece with many problems and anxieties during the war. They returned once more to Hungary to take over Laci's father's business but saw Hungary's flirtation with Hitler turn into a marriage. They left Hungary for good, which may have saved their lives. A year later, the Germans brought the war and terror to Greece and the Raisers had to spend much time in hiding.

After graduating from a Greek-American high school, Jancsi wanted to study in the U.S. and was able to get a scholarship at the small Rio Grande College near Cincinnati, Ohio. He received his degree of architecture at Ohio State University and his M.S. at the University of Kentucky. He eventually moved to California where he was married in 1961. He has three children: Cynthia, Jennifer and Phillip. He was well established as an architect when he convinced his parents to join him in San Mateo, California. Laci formed the Raiser Construction Company with John and both made it a successful enterprise with hard work. One of their apartment houses was managed by Manci. It is still Manci's residence today. Laci died in the

1970's and Manci had to carry on courageously. She is the last link to the generation of our parents and is loved by all who know her.

#### POSTSCRIPT

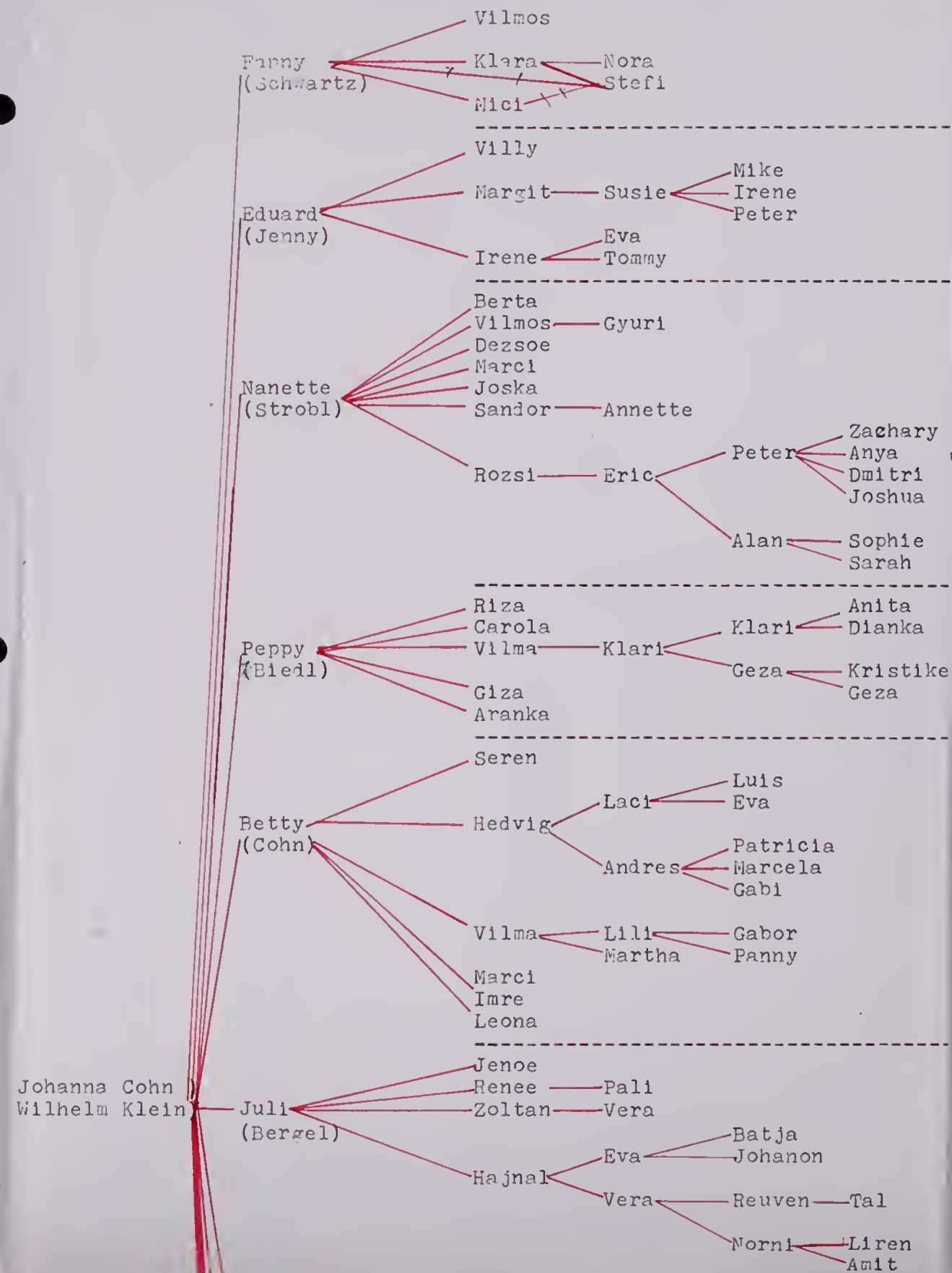
I have given you the story of the Klein family as I see it. Some parts are too short, others too long. It is the story of a family which showed much love, loyalty and success. The First World War brought grief to some and spared others. The difficult 1920's brought new hardship, but with love and loyalty still in place there was hope for a better life. The advent of the Second World War and the Holocaust brought tragedy and grief and wounds that have not healed to this day. Judging from the news I receive from you from all five continents, I feel that there is new hope for our children and grandchildren. We cannot dwell on our grief, but we should not forget. One last thought: No matter what we are: Jew, Christian or Agnostic, we are all children of Judah.

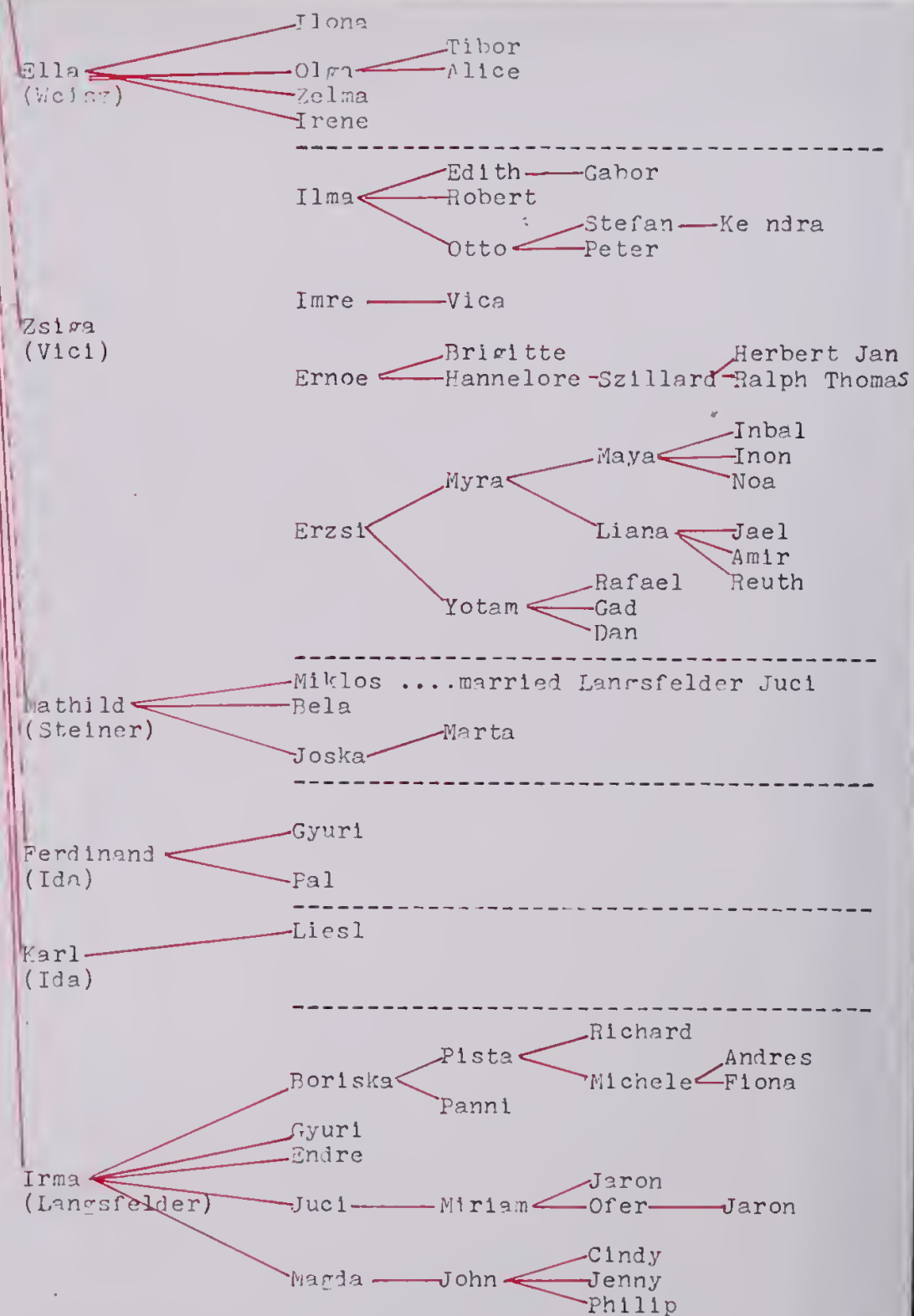






# THE FAMILY OF WILHELM AND JOHANNA KLEIN





Status on March 15, 1986

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